

## Furman Magazine

Volume 45  
Issue 1 *Spring 2002*

Article 19

4-1-2002

# University community loses three longtime professors: Richard R. Maag

John Beckford  
*Furman University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

### Recommended Citation

Beckford, John (2002) "University community loses three longtime professors: Richard R. Maag," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 45 : Iss. 1 , Article 19.

Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol45/iss1/19>

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact [scholarexchange@furman.edu](mailto:scholarexchange@furman.edu).

## University community loses three longtime professors

*Furman was shaken this winter by the deaths of three professors who had combined to serve the university for more than 90 years.*

*Roy E. Lindahl (1932-2002), professor emeritus of classical languages, died February 3. Holder of a doctorate from Tulane University, he taught at Furman from 1968 to 1995. He was an ordained Presbyterian minister, a member of the Greenville Chorale and the Westminster Presbyterian Church choir, and an active community volunteer.*

*Richard R. Maag (1934-2002), professor of music since 1964, died February 26. He held a Ph.D. from the University of Texas and had*

*served as principal cellist in the Greenville, Colorado Springs, Austin and San Antonio symphonies. A member of the South Carolina Music Educators Hall of Fame, he introduced Suzuki Talent Education to South Carolina.*

*William E. Leverette, Jr. (1925-2002), professor emeritus of history, died March 11. He earned a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University and taught at Furman from 1960 until 1988, focusing on U.S. intellectual history and the study of science and nature in the American experience. After he retired he published a novel, Shooting the Limit.*

### Roy E. Lindahl

Roy Lindahl may have officially retired from Furman in 1995 after 27 years as a professor of classical languages, but even after his departure from full-time teaching, he remained active in the life of the university.

Until his sudden death in February, Roy spent many hours sharing his passion for classical studies as an instructor in the Furman University Learning in Retirement (FULIR) program, part of Furman's Division of Continuing Education. He offered courses in Greek drama, the dialogues of Plato, and Greek art and architecture, and was planning to offer a full year of Latin in an upcoming session.

Roy was also a major force in another Furman initiative, Bridges to a Brighter Future, an academic enrichment program for outstanding Greenville County high school students from families with financial need. He participated in the recruitment and interview process for the Bridges program's summer counselors, helped plan worship services and accompanied the group on field trips. He also was the founding benefactor for "Chrysalis," a program for eighth-grade girls and academic mentors that serves as a preliminary step to the Bridges program.

Judith Babb Chandler '66, director of Bridges to a Brighter Future, says, "I think Roy's family recognized his love for the program in their choice of Bridges as a beneficiary of gifts in his memory. The program was enriched by his presence, and we are grateful that we could bring so much joy into his life."

The children and counselors in the program knew Roy as "Mr. Preacher Man." Says Chandler, "What was especially wonderful about his relationship with Bridges was that the kids loved him for who he was. They probably had no idea that he was a scholar and master teacher. They just knew that he loved them, encouraged them and supported them in every way he could. They didn't know that he was a classics professor, and they really didn't care what his 'work' was. They just knew that he was one of the people in their lives who could be counted on to accept them as they are and support them in their dreams."

The Bridges students might have been surprised to learn that "Mr. Preacher Man" did hold a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Tulane. A native of Owosso, Mich., he taught everything from beginning Greek to advanced Latin and Byzantine civilization, and from 1973-78 served as chair of the classical studies department.

Roy also had a special interest in archaeology. After spending several summers studying and working at archaeological sites in Greece and Israel, he created a popular course in Greek archaeology.

He was active in the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, an organization of university, college, secondary and elementary teachers of Latin, Greek and all other studies which focus on the world of classical antiquity. He served the group as secretary-treasurer from 1981-90, and he had served as CAMWS state vice president from 1971-81. In 1990 the organization awarded him an *ovatio* for his contributions. For 16 years he served as a trustee of Eta Sigma Phi, the Classics honor society, and advised the Beta Beta chapter at Furman.

Roy was a dedicated volunteer for a variety of programs in the Greenville community and was a leading presence in his church, Westminster Presbyterian, where in addition to singing in the choir and serving as assistant pastor he wrote frequent and often controversial columns for the church bulletin that drew as much on his classical training as his deep faith. J. Stephen Freeman '77, a Greek student of Roy's, once commented that to Roy, "faith and knowledge seemed easy companions."

He is survived by a daughter, two sons, a sister and six grandchildren.

— Anne Leen

*Professor and Chair of Classics*

*Memorials: Bridges to a Brighter Future Program at Furman, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613, or Westminster Presbyterian Church Library, 2310 Augusta Street, Greenville, S.C. 29605.*

### Richard R. Maag

*The following is excerpted from remarks delivered March 4 during a memorial service at Furman.*

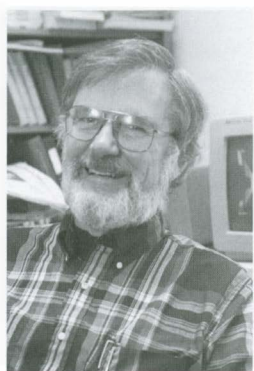
I had the pleasure of knowing Dick Maag for nearly 26 years, and what I admired most in him was his honesty. Whether critiquing a performance, assessing a student's talent or offering his opinion of the latest political topic, Dick was candid and to the point. Yet at the same time he framed his opinions in such a way that he never smothered opposing ideas. That's why you could talk endlessly with him — about anything.

I'll never forget once when the two of us were wrapped in conversation while sharing a ride to a performance in Anderson, just down I-85. After

what seemed to be only a short time, we realized our driving had taken a backseat to our dialogue. We had missed the Anderson exit and were crossing Lake Hartwell into Georgia. Time could stand still when you were with Dick.

One quality that really drew people to Dick was his honesty about himself. How many of us have the courage to admit our faults and weaknesses the way he did? Because he was so honest about himself, it revealed a humanity that made us believe he accepted all of our faults and weaknesses.

Dick was a master teacher, in large part because he was mindful of all the nuances that influence a student's education. While most of us in the department concentrate on teaching students to play the right notes at the right time, Dick was more interested in knowing *how* we



**From left, Roy Lindahl, Dick Maag and Bill Leverette combined to provide many years of inspiration to Furman students.**

learn to make music — and in the larger question of music's role in life. I remember one of his "honest moments" in a music faculty meeting, when he put us in our places by saying that "we couldn't call ourselves music educators unless we knew that Aerosmith was a rock band and not an airplane mechanic."

But my words alone are not enough to encapsulate this remarkable person's influence. During his illness, Dick received a number of special messages from friends, colleagues and former students.

A.V. Huff, vice president for academic affairs and dean, wrote to Dick: "As a teacher, no one has meant more to his students than you. If I had to pick out someone who best exemplified the kind of teaching that we all aspire to, you would be the model of that teacher. . . . You have always given of your best, not only in your playing but also in your continuing search for knowledge."

Dick's former teacher at the University of Texas, Phyllis Young, stressed his contributions as a mentor: "Through his attitude and actions, he reminded us what life is all about." And indeed, in *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer writes, "The power of our mentors is not necessarily in the models of good teaching they gave us. . . . Their powers are in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling the impact on our lives."

## William E. Leverette, Jr.

*These remarks were delivered March 15 during a memorial service at Furman:*

Of all my fond memories of Bill Leverette, my thoughts go back to my first one-on-one conversation with him.

It was a deceptively mundane episode in the winter term of 1980. I believe Bill was in his first term back after his heart attack, teaching "U.S. History 1890 to 1941," a course that I have inherited from him. I was, at the time, a sophomore English major, before Leverette had drawn me into his circle and into the history department. (I now, like many of his students, mark my life in terms of "pre-Leverette" and "post-Leverette.")

I was in my second or third history class at Furman, a fairly bright but unfocused and somewhat uninspired student. A week or so into the term, I approached Professor Leverette to discuss a book that we were reading — a book long since forgotten, which is telling since I remember everything else about the encounter.

As we talked about the book, Bill pulled a string of small, hard candy from his vest pocket, then produced a Swiss army knife from his pants pocket, cut the string, and ate a piece of candy. As the discussion about the book waned, Bill offered me a piece of candy, I think expecting me — a linebacker on the football team — to manfully break the string. Instead, I pulled from my pocket a small, single-blade pocketknife with a bone handle, cut the string, and ate my candy.

When the history lesson ended, Bill took an interest in my knife and we shifted seamlessly to a discussion of pocketknives and the virtues of his Swiss-army style versus my basic single-blade. He pointed out the advantages of multiple blades and tools. I countered with the notion that a single blade was enough for most uses, and that such an elemental tool ought to have a natural handle rather than the synthetic red plastic of a Swiss army knife.

Anna Barbrey Joiner '79, instructor of viola and chamber music at Furman, said she was "awakened to the truth" when she was a student and Dick suggested that she play the viola because, in his words, "she had a viola personality." Anna said, "It took me four years to discover that for myself, but he planted the seed that eventually flowered into the professional career I enjoy today."

Dick Maag understood the glories of making music and the long-lasting influence a good teacher can have. But more than that, he understood the value of life outside one's profession. He truly loved and valued his friends, and he never failed to acknowledge how meaningful your friendship was to him.

We will be forever blessed by the lessons about life and love that serve as his legacy to each of us.

— John Beckford  
Professor of Music

*Memorials: The Richard R. Maag Endowed Scholarship at Furman, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613; First Church of Christ Scientist, 45 Southland Avenue, Greenville, S.C. 29601; or Music Fund, First Presbyterian Church, 200 West Washington Street, Greenville, S.C. 29601.*

I had no idea at the time, but given Bill's strong preference for simplicity over unnecessary complexity and for things natural over those artificial, I had said just the right thing. It was entirely appropriate that our friendship began in a conversation that started on an academic topic and concluded with a chat about a symbol of our shared love of the outdoors.

Today, what makes that episode meaningful is the way Bill so naturally turned our conversation from the academic and intellectual to the personal and practical. That transition was an instinctive part of Bill's teaching and his personality. He always sought to connect with his students on some common ground so that he could pull us onto the unfamiliar and sometimes threatening, but always rewarding, turf of ideas and the intellect.

In this regard, Bill, though a complicated man, was an integrated man. There was a close connection between what he did for a living and who he was, between what he taught and wrote about and how he lived. His study of history, especially ideas in history, profoundly shaped how he acted in the world. And he revealed to us, his students, how the study of history could be, and should be, a tool in shaping who we were and who we would become.

I have absorbed some of Bill's teaching style and much of his outlook on nature and the relationship of the individual to institutions and society. But more than that, I aspire to match his dedication to the art of teaching, to the power of ideas, and to the importance of individual relationships in the academic enterprise.

As a teacher and as a person, I am at my best when I am inspired by Bill Leverette's example.

— Steve O'Neill '82  
Associate Professor of History

*Memorials: The William E. Leverette Endowment Fund at Furman, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613; or the Sierra Club.*